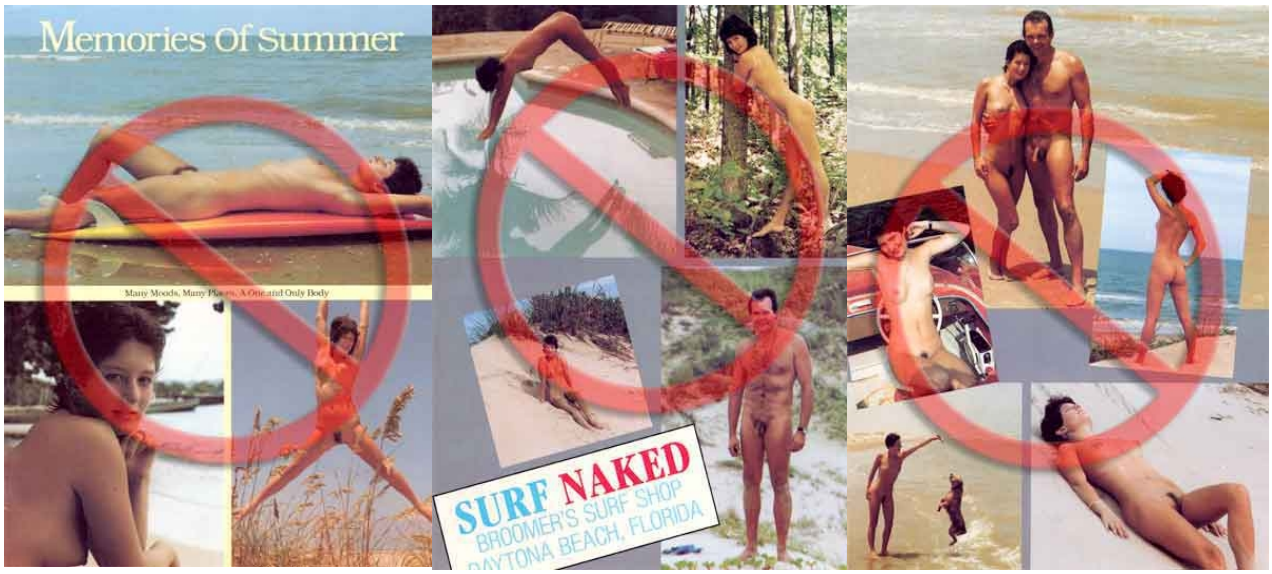


# Letters Lee Baxandall Censored

## Reader Correspondence Rejected by *Clothed with the Sun*, along with Lee Baxandall's replies

*Compiled by Claude (Anthropic) in collaboration with Nikki Craft. Craft's history, experience, and analysis are the foundation; Claude's contribution is research, structure, and composition.*

**These photographs are reproduced here 40 years after their initial reproduction, not to repeat the purpose for which Baxandall published them, but to document and critically examine that purpose. They are reproduced small and at low resolution, solely to illustrate specific, dated criticism already made of them by name in the letters below — Anderson's, Small's, and others' contemporaneous objections to the posing, the shaving, and the staging. This is a historical and critical use: commentary, criticism, and scholarship on a documented controversy within American naturism, not a decorative or standalone presentation of the images themselves. The subject, Edi Broom, was an adult at the time. Without these images, a reader has no way to independently evaluate the letters' central claim — that the photographs were staged to misrepresent an adult woman's age and consent — which is precisely the claim this collection exists to document.**

*These letters were submitted to CwS in response to the CwS for publication. They were rejected/banned, while Baxandall's replies were private correspondence addressed to each individual person in private correspondence. Craft retrieved these letters in Oshkosh, intending them for a future ICONoclast piece that never materialized. They are published here for the first time, forty years later, for historical documentation.*

*The controversy began with a centerspread in CwS 7.1, "Memories of Summer," featuring Edi Broom, which Michelle Handler and others criticized as sexist and exploitative. What follows is the wave of reader correspondence — nearly all of it rejected for publication — that followed.*

*The images reproduced here are small. As originally published, they were full-page, glossy color reproductions — slick, high-production images run as a magazine centerspread. This was not a*

*departure from nudist-publication norms; it sat comfortably within a long tradition running through titles like Nudist Moppets, Nude & Natural, and Health and Efficiency. The problem was never that this centerspread was somehow foreign to naturist publishing. The problem is that this is exactly what naturist publishing has long done — and it is entirely incompatible with what a movement claiming feminist support should be putting on its pages.*

*Edi Broom was an adult, married woman — eighteen at the time of the shoot. But the centerspread's styling worked to erase that. Several correspondents named the effect at the time: M. Anderson wrote of Edi's "pubic mohawk" and called her posing "artificial, not spontaneous"; Fred Small described "her public hair shaved to a narrow strip," writing that "she is not simply out enjoying the sun, she is posing artificially in order to titillate." The title itself, "Memories of Summer," is telling — these are not Edi's memories being offered to the reader. It is a male fantasy narrative wearing her name and body, built for Clothed with the Sun's readership rather than for her. Forty years later, the same styling produced an unplanned demonstration of exactly this effect: when these images were shared with Claude, Anthropic's AI model, for this project, its first response was a snap visual judgment that one photograph appeared to show a child — triggering a strict, non-negotiable policy against examining or discussing any image read that way, one that does not relax even once corrected. Told plainly the subject was an adult, the model still would not revisit the image. Whatever else this centerspread was, it was built to make an adult woman look underage and sexually available at once, pulling male readers into exactly that fantasy — and it worked well enough to still be doing that job on an outside, disinterested reader decades later.*

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> **"We as naturists are watching our credibility suffer as the outside world discovers that we are exactly what they thought we were. And photos like you published only that much more affirm their beliefs that we are into the nudity for the sexual aspect, not for the wholesome."**

### LEE ANN TURNER

### LEE ANN TURNER

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*St. Louis Park, MN*

*November 15, 1987*

I would like to see this letter published in the LETTERS section of CwS. As you know, I'm not much of a writer. So, if I write, you know that I must feel very strongly about an issue to put it on paper. It's now time -- perhaps past time -- for me to join the voices of those who've been speaking out about the abuse of women's nudity in Clothed with the Sun (I'm aware that CwS is not the only publication guilty of this).

I've seen Michelle's letter to you, and I will state up front that I agree with her. I felt that it was written with care, concern, and friendship.

I feel that you are making a grave mistake by going the way of the general population in joining the conservative flow of our times. Do you really feel your beliefs or are you just someone who

joins in trends? It's becoming pretty clear that maybe you never really took feminism to heart. You apparently feel that you have to appeal to the people who are part of the current backlash against the women's movement rather than stand solidly against the criticism which you've most undoubtedly received from those who don't want women's voices raised in the naturist movement.

They want us when they need us to get arrested, but they don't seem to want to hear our reasons why we feel it's important. Basically, they want naked women, but not naked women who think.

As I've become increasingly disillusioned with the direction of the naturist movement, my despondency has resulted in my quietly slipping away, rather than standing ground against those who would continue the old trends of nudism and exploitation. But I'm not going to give up on naturism, because I believe in it with my heart and soul.

At the same time, I just can't be associated with groups that don't have my values. When I see the overuse of women's photos, the swinger elements thriving in the local groups, and then the intolerant writings by religious fundamentalists, I realize that these people are not believers in the naturism that I believe in. And, as Michelle said, the naturism I thought you believed in, too.

We as naturists are watching our credibility suffer as the outside world discovers that we are exactly what they thought we were. And photos like you published only that much more affirm their beliefs that we are into the nudity for the sexual aspect, not for the wholesome.

We are giving up all that we have fought for when you dangle carrots to appease so many diverse elements. There is a difference between those who fully live naturism and those who just wear the title when convenient. You are, as Michelle said, playing all sides against the other.

It's apparent that the Naturist Society is at a critical moment in its history. It could go in at least three directions:

1. It could continue attempting to pacify everyone, and subsequently strangle itself,

2. It could commit to humanist values which include feminism, the portrayal of gay and lesbian relationships, images of the disabled, the old, the fat, the plain, or,

3. It could go the direction of the many nudist publications before it, and continue to exploit women's nudity to keep its male readers hooked.

It's time for some deep soul-searching, Lee, something which I sense you aren't comfortable with at all. Yet, I see it as being critical, both for you and for the naturist movement. We can't keep going on this way. Something's got to change.

**BRUCE NAPPI**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*Reading, Ma*

*November l8, 1988*

...Despite the claims that naturism is family oriented, and that there are supposedly more than 500 such units right here in the New England area, they do not choose to join together in family activities. In fact, it appears to me that there are very few family oriented activities anywhere in U.S. naturism.

In the Spring Issue of CwS, you ran a controversial center spread. Given the sensitivities naturists are expressing at this time, I feel you were making a statement contrary to both family and feminist values.

Because of these two factors, I do not feel it is of any value to continue my membership with the naturist society and will not renew my membership for the coming year.

**CAROL AGATE**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*Los Angeles, Ca*

*Nov. 7, 1987*

I was distressed to see the correspondence about the sexism in CwS, and even more distressed to see your response to it. The reason for my distress is that I admire you tremendously and have considered you one of the few nonsexist men I know. Therefore, I don't understand why you don't see the sexism in the magazine.

Your reply to Michelle Handler's and Melinda Vadas' letters puzzles me. I can understand your reaction to the tone of the letters. Attempts at dialogue are much more productive than ultimatums, and anyone who would call the photographs pornography has little concept of real pornography. But they make a valid point about sexism. Just look at your different treatment of men and women.

I agree with you that there is beauty in the female body and there is nothing wrong with photographing that beauty. But there is beauty in the male body, too. The magazine has many more photographs of women than of men. The men are photographed in perfectly natural poses, just standing and looking at the camera or going about their normal activities. If you had as many photos of men leaping in the air and spread over rocks as you do of women, then I would accept the idea that there is nothing sexist in your attempt to show sexuality.

CwS is a beautiful magazine with excellent editorial material. But I do wish its pictorial material would treat men and women equally.

**JIM HERRIOT**

*TO LEE AND MICHELLE*

*Palo Alto, Ca*

...As for the specific conflict which you are in the midst of, how to decide if a particular photo is appropriate for publication: I believe that the issue is primarily political and secondarily aesthetic. I hope the aesthetic debate continues raging.

Fortunately, the political question is simpler: who is our target constituency and how can we speak to it? I would suggest that the feminist contingent is important to cultivate and hold on to. Even if a certain genre of photos is innocent and beautiful to boot, but it reminds folks of photos in other magazines which are anti-women, then our political good sense suggests chosing alternative photos.

**FRED SMALL**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*Cambridge, Ma*

I have been a member of The Naturist Society for four years. I think you should be commended for your leadership in presenting in CwS egalitarian images of women and men and thoughtful, provocative feminist essays.

Still, we have a long way to go before women are fully respected either in the naturist movement or in society at large. While I enjoy reading CwS, I am unable to display it in my home for my friends to see. The reason is that, despite your best intentions, sexist and exploitive imagery of women remains commonplace in CwS.

Examining a recent issue, I confirmed what had been my general impression: photographs of nude women outnumber those of nude men by about two to one. My experience at nude beaches suggests that, in fact, men outnumber women there by at least the same ratio, and often far more. So these photos do not reflect reality, but the preferred subject matter of photographer and editor. If women and men are equal in naturism, the photographs you publish should represent this equality.

Many of the photos in CwS, including the great majority of your covers, show naturism at its best -- natural, relaxed, playful, and gender-neutral. But the poses chosen by many male photographers with female subjects continue to demonstrate the pornographic dynamic rightly denounced elsewhere in the magazine.

The photo essay "Memories of Summer" in CwS 7.1 is an egregious example: eleven photos of the women, and two of the man. He faces the camera squarely. She bends, turns, looks coyly over her shoulder, lifts her arms above her head, reclines on the sand, leaps in the air spreading her legs, her public hair shaved to a narrow strip. She is not simply out enjoying the sun, she is posing artificially in order to titillate. Her sexuality is not objectionable, only her sexual relationship with the anonymous reader -- a relationship cognizant of her body but ignorant of her humanity. It is impossible to imagine your publishing so flirtatious a sequence with a male subject. At least, you haven't come close during my four years as a subscriber.

I know that many of your male readers enjoy this soft-core approach, and that many prefer not to think about sexism at all. You have demonstrated your determination to broaden their thinking, and your own as well. I suggest that you routinely consult feminist women on your choices of photographs for CwS, and that you take their advice.

This summer I had the pleasure of visiting for the first time the famous Ledges in Vermont, a beautiful setting for naturist recreation. Men outnumbered women by ten to one. I look forward to the day when women feel as safe and welcome in the naturist community as men. I ask your continued help.

> **"While I enjoy reading CwS, I am unable to display it in my home for my friends to see. The reason is that, despite your best intentions, sexist and exploitive imagery of women remains commonplace in CwS.**
>
> **...the poses chosen by many male photographers with female subjects continue to demonstrate the pornographic dynamic rightly denounced elsewhere in the magazine."**

**FRED SMALL**

**LEE BAXANDALL**

*TO FRED SMALL*

*October 5, 1987*

I appreciate your various initiatives for a better world but, frankly, your expectations on CwS are a little unrealistic and puritanical to boot.

Take your comments on the center color photos. You speak about Edi Broom's posing for "the anonymous reader". In fact -- and as a note on the facing page pointed out -- these photos are by her husband (and one of him by her). They were taken with no thought of publication, but only to document their loving relationship. If some of the conventions of female display in our society creep in, perhaps you can think of alternative conventions -- but most people cannot, they are reliant upon their culture.

I do not find Edi's expressiveness to have the least exploitative intent. I am offended that you think that our publication of the snapshots -- when publication was not their original purpose -- changes the character of these cherished family photos.

I could go on, but that's it in a nutshell. You do not seem to realize how difficult it is to go against the sexist and exploitative grain of American publishing.

Meanwhile, you have the audacity to declare that "sexist and exploitative photography is commonplace" in CwS and you speak of our "pornographic dynamic". Sorry, Fred, but I do not think that you and I share the same universe.

I am, however, a feminist -- and not a short - term one either. My association began with the New York Radical Feminists in the mid-Sixties and I apologize to no recent convert, such as Handler, for my notion of pro-woman values.

Where CwS does have room to improve you might like to think on the implications of "it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." You have never, yourself, submitted photography that is unsexist and unexploitative -- in the most practical way, you have not helped.

Please reconsider your premises.

> **"With all due respect to Edi and Brian Bloom, I also feel the "Memories of Summer" centerfold (CwS 7.1) was unflattering at best, offensive at worst. It was just too posed, too slick and resembled to a great degree the traditional portrayals of women in Playboy and the like.**

**MARY MINARD**

*To LEE BAXANDALL*

> **"Writing smug letters in defense of mindless pseudo-feminists makes no contribution...**
>
> **If you're merely spouting hot air, get off my case."**

**LEE BAXANDALL**

*TO MARY MINARD*

**MARY K. MINARD**

*TO THE NATURIST SOCIETY*

*Dec. 6, 1987*

First of all, thank you for the recent issue of CwS featuring "the Nude in Art." As an artist and sometimes model, I found it all very interesting. The article on nudes as postage stamps was a great idea! Thanks also for not following a reader's advice to print only photos of "attractive young men and women." Beautiful bodies get boring after a while!

Speaking of beautiful bodies, the review in CwS 7.2 (CwS Demeans and Exploits Women?) points once again to the uneasy alliance between feminism and naturism. After reading the three-page squabble between Michelle Handler and Lee Baxandall, I must side with Ms. Handler. She reminded us that women have very real concerns about exploitations in naturism, intended or otherwise. With all due respect to Edi and Brian Bloom, I also feel the "Memories of Summer" centerfold (CwS 7.1) was unflattering at best, offensive at worst. It was just too posed, too slick and resembled to a great degree the traditional portrayals of women in Playboy and the like. We need to be very aware of the feelings that may arise in response to an emotionally-charged act such as social nudity. There's a fine line between art and pornography.

I was disturbed by Mr. Baxandall's extremely defensive response to Ms. Handler's letter. Yes, Ms. Handler's objections were forceful, but that's no excuse for Mr. Baxandall's insults. He called Ms. Handler a "prig" and said her concerns about women's exploitation were "bizarre." Throughout his response he adopted a smug, paternalistic air that I found disgusting.

Do we need such mudslinging? Or can we work on the difficult and sensitive areas inherent in naturism with respect and, as Ms. Handler has done, with love?

**LEE BAXANDALL**

*TO MARY MINARD*

*December l4, 1987*

You talk of my smugness, of Handler's "love." Well let me tell you.

You call it 'squabbling' but Handler and I were not having a dispute. Rather, she attacked me in print and to 200 addresses without warning or attempt at discussion. It constitutes coercion and violates several levels of ethics. Are you concerned with ethics -- just ethics not 'feminist' ethics? I hope you are.

I assisted Michelle in her development and advancement since she was 20. The presence of pro-woman values in CwS is my initiative. Nowhere had it emerged in nudism, and there was no U.S. naturism before TNS. You do not take account of what has been done. Don't you believe in historical perspective? I hope you do.

You do not seem to understand the evil and foolishness of what Michelle Handler did and she continues to do. She has seriously harmed the prestige of feminism within the Society because 99% find her attack vicious and off the wall. She slandered me across six continents. She has without permission or information presumed to tell the world about what she thinks she knows to be my private life, my business ethics and my personal and editorial values. -- I hope you do not make a double standard -- one for relating to men, another for women?

The substance of what she says and demands, most especially where she claims to represent a progressive and enlightened standpoint, exhibits terrible judgment. Handler has become an 'overnight' alleged feminist. But really a zealot, lacking historical perspective or realistic sense of politics and public. Definitely, she is no feminist -- unless you think that any time any woman opens her mouth, a feminist is speaking.

There is much positive work to be done for body acceptance, equality and happiness. And for naturist opportunities. I wish to bring one to your attention, Mary.

You work, in some capacity, for Maine public radio. In Maine there is currently an urgent need to refine the legal status of recreational nudity. This has focused on Drakes Island Beach's nude section at Wells, Maine...[he goes on to explain the situation]

Mary Minard, I challenge you -- in your privileged professional position [she was, unbeknownst to Baxandall, a technician] with Maine public radio -- to interest yourself in this needed and positive project. It will make a contribution. Writing smug letters in defense of mindless pseudo-feminists makes no contribution.

If you will involve yourself in investigative journalism re: the situation at Drakes Island Beach at Wells, I will lend you the support information that you need. I have names and addresses of beach goers and state officials and a fund of newspaper coverage.

Now that's a practical thing you can do.

If you're merely spouting hot air, get off my case.

**DIANE McCURDY**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*Sacramento, Ca*

*November 8, 1987*

The last few issues of CwS have made me more and more uncomfortable. This issue has finally clarified my discomfort.

I felt revulsed by the cover. While reading the "Persephone" article, I began to understand my negative emotional reactions:

A cover that appeals to the male who identifies with this farmer..." the needy American male"...is not a male that I want attracted to a publication that I read.

I identify with the innocent Persephone who is minding her own business. As a five year old I was molested by an older neighbor (he was incarcerated) who had hands and a gawkers face very similar to the farmers painted by Benton. As I look at the picture, fear consumes me. I am waiting for him to put his face on Persephone or to touch her body without her permission. I do not find Benton's peeper portrayed with wit and understanding; rather I find it licentious and pornographic.

As you know, I have no respect for Leif Heilberg based on my experiences with him at Lupin and my disgust with many of his photographs. His "story" belongs in Penthouse. I feel it denigrated my perceptions of Naturist affiliation in America.

Many of the pictures have been offensive to me in the last few issues. I don't see or understand the offensive nature of the photo of Johanna (Pg. 80) some of the center fold (pg. 40 or 42).

As a "good friend" of yours Lee, I was appalled at your use of inflammatory words in your rebuttal to Michelle Handler's letter. "Prig," "bizarre" and "arbitrary sort of autocracy without responsibility" sounded like lashing out by a wounded non-benevolent dictator.

I don't plan to renew my subscription because I find the magazine no longer a vehicle to introduce my friends to naturism. In fact, I would be embarrassed to have anyone find this last issue in my house even though there were some great articles, such as stamps, mud and body painting.

*[Diane McCurdy's letter of Nov. 8, 1987 (above) was not published in CwS. But later, when McCurdy wrote a brief note (below), Baxandall published it next to criticisms of Handler, making it appear that Diane supported his editorial practices. Another letter followed on May 28, 1988 (also below) with criticism of his decision to do this, and a reiteration of her previous criticisms. This third letter was also not published.]*

**DIANE McCURDY**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*January 19, 1988*

Hi Lee, A quick thank you for a marvelous issue of CwS, 7.3. I felt the photos were well balanced and the articles most interesting. Thanks!

**DIANE MCCURDY**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*May 25, 1988*

I've just read the quote from me in your last issue of CwS, Vol 7.4. That quote was so out of context that I feel it was unfair and biased.

I criticized and I praised. I feel used because you only printed the praise. I sent the handwritten note praising CwS, Vol 7.3. But your readers are unaware of my previous letter criticizing Vol. 7.1 & 2.

*To refresh your memory, my major criticisms in my letter of November 8, 1987 were...[She quotes from the letter above.]*

Please don't misunderstand me, Lee. I wish to remain a member of the Naturist Society. I no longer wish to receive a subscription to CwS.

P.S. I give permission for this letter to be published in the next issue of CwS if it is included in its entirety.

**LEE BAXANDALL**

*TO DIANE MCCURDY*

*May 28, 1988*

You unfairly attack my publication of your handwritten note in praise of 7.3. That note as published fairly represented the correspondence from which it came.

As for your earlier remarks about 7.2, these were -- forgive me -- so off-the-wall that I did not choose to embarrass you (not me) by publishing them.

There was not another letter, from anyone, attacking 7.2. It would have been unrepresentative to print yours suggesting that you were typical of any opinion but your own ill-conceived opinion.

You say you can be a member of TNS and be disgusted by its magazine. I disagree...

## MARIANNA HOPPE-HANDLER

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*September 10, 1987*

I have to comment on the recent controversy which brought about Michelle's letter. Even though I do not always agree with her views and actions (after all, we are mother and daughter), I firmly support her in her stand this time.

I had commented on the "pin-up" section in CwS 7.1 earlier. Meanwhile I had a chance to take it to beaches and talk with men and women there. Most women were VERY unhappy with this kind of portrayal of "Naturism." Many men also understood the issue raised by women like Michelle and Nikki, but all too many of the men to whom I showed it casually flipped through it, stopped at the pages in question and drooled. The comment often is: "I like looking at pretty girls."

Is that what Naturism and CwS is all about? There is nothing wrong with sexuality and sensuality, but just like Michelle, I feel there is absolutely no balance in the way CwS has shown it versus real people in true naturist living. As I wrote to you earlier, one man commented that "we don't see beautiful chicks like this on the beach" and "there is not as much sensuality and intimacy" as shown in the Guide to Nude Beaches."

I am sure it sells better than pictures of "ordinary" people, but that is not what I joined the Naturist Society for.

I think it is time for you to re-evaluate your policy, be more responsive to your readers, and most of all, have the input of a woman when putting each issue together.

I find it hard to believe that a man of your caliber does not understand the issue which we are talking about.

I am not giving up hope yet!

> **"There is nothing wrong with sexuality and sensuality, but just like Michelle, I feel there is absolutely no balance in the way CwS has shown it versus REAL PEOPLE in TRUE naturist living. As I wrote to you earlier, one man commented [on CwS} that "we don't see beautiful chicks like this on the beach"**

**MARIANNA**

**HOPPE--HANDLER**

**LEE BAXANDALL**

*TO MARIANNA HOPPE--HANDLER*

*Sept 15, 1987*

You have an unquestioned right to support Michelle's values (which have nonetheless taken a hideously puritanical direction.)

I do not understand how you can support the way she has proceeded. In effect, she has resigned from the movement, because nearly everyone sees her now as an extremist and pities rather than supports her.

Meanwhile, her way of proceeding has created a drama and a martyr pose for herself, which, incidentally, few people accept. They see her rather as an aggressor who hasn't made her case.

It's too bad. Michelle's personal agenda has overwhelmed the years of contribution she's made. Overnight she has dumped the credibility and stature she'd gained.

I'm writing frankly to you about Michelle because we both have cherished her and want her not to make mistakes (though we may not agree on what constitute mistakes), and because I know you're your own person and a committed Naturist. MARIANNA HOPPE-HANDLER

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*October 4, 1987*

I am in receipt of your letter of Sept. 15 and am sad to see that you are in no way addressing the issues, but much rather harp on the WAY Michelle acted, something which I did NOT SAY I supported.

I knew what she was planning to do, even though I did not see the letters until I wrote to you. I questioned first the wisdom of it, but after some discussion and thought I could only too well understand her frustration and feeling of it being no use to talk with you or write to you only.

For some time many people have questioned the way CwS was going and the kind of photography which was being used over and over. I remember Nikki making a very strong stand on this in her lecture at Birch Acres in 1985. It is an issue which has been discussed over and over at gatherings. How responsive have you been to it? Do you really blame her for taking a drastic step?

Michelle showed a lot of guts. I do not believe that she sees herself in the role of martyr at all. I knew she risked your rejection, which could hurt her. You are a very powerful and influential man, Lee, but she did it in spite of it, hoping that you were sensitive and big enough to deal with the ISSUES.

**MARIANNA HOPPE-HANDLER**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*February 12, 1988*

With enclosed letter I am cancelling my membership in TNS. I am tired of dribbles by "Happy Jack" and advertisements of resorts with only beautiful people. If I did not know that the average person in Cypress Cove etc. is not all that perfect, as pictured, I could most certainly be hesitant to go there after seeing the photograph in CwS.

Most of all though I am not renewing because of YOU.

Even though I have never shared Michelle's admiration of you, it has surprised me how small you are and how much your insecurities show. Statements such as "a 21 year old community college dropout and paper salesperson" and telling people things about her personal life, which were told to you as a FRIEND, are cheap shots.

If you thought so little of her -- why did you hire her? You knew she would do a very good job representing TNS -- and in spite of her 21 years she handled herself like a pro and TNS had every reason to be proud of her.

I do not totally agree with Michelle's way of handling the picture episode, but I most certainly support her on the issues. And yes, Lee, the "pretty image issue" has come up often enough at Gatherings, even in the few meetings which I attended. Instead of opening the issue to discussion, you pouted and showed your "power" and engaged in cheap shots. In the end that makes YOU look bad.

You have all the advantages and you are using them well in the way you printed the Vadas and Handler letters, with your editorial ahead of them. You most certainly have not left a way open to dialogue, which I see in Michelle's letter. You know your business and know how to swing opinions, but as a person you lost a lot of respect from me -- as well as others.

I get so sick when I show CwS around at beaches and get the reaction from men, when they see the "pin-up" section: "Wow, where can I get this magazine?" They are not buying it for the naturist content, but pictures of "pretty girls," and you know it.

One man said to me: "Well, I like to look at pretty girls. If the center fold was of MEN, I would not buy it. After all, I am not homosexual!" Could one say it any clearer than this, that men look at the photographs from a sexual standpoint?

I am sure my letter will not make much difference in your attitude, but I want you to know where I stand.

## MARIANNA HOPPE--HANDLER

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*MARCH 25, 1988*

Let's stop making excuses, Lee, and sit down and discuss what is bothering a lot of people. With your show of anger nothing will be achieved.

I looked at the heading on your last letter, the salutation of "Marianna" only. It seems if anyone does not agree with you, you can not even observe basic courtesies of social correspondence? Even though I do not agree with you on some issues, I can address you with proper respect.

Lee, you are so rigid and unbending! I had hoped for more understanding and style from you!

The lack of it from a person like you disappoints me.

P.S. How long do you intend to list Michelle's address in CwS under "Puri-Tans"? I assume it is without her permission. [It was purely vindictive.] It is utterly tasteless and vindictive -- as well as harassment, the same thing you supposedly fight against when done by government agencies. Everyone who has seen it so far told me that they find such action by you childish and despicable.

The only one you are hurting with it is yourself. One person said to me: Lee all too often reacts from a position of anger, instead of cooling down and thinking about it and handling situations maturely. I am starting to agree.

> **"I am angry and saddened by yours and others' patronizing and vicious responses dismissing the outrage of feminists in the naturist movement. Over the years I have seen many, many pictures in CwS which are offensive to me as a feminist. ...I can no longer believe that you're a feminist. It's been my experience that a feminist listens to women..."**

## LINDA COZZEE

## LINDA A.K. COZZEE

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*February 22, 1988*

I've been a feminist activist for 17 1/2 yrs and a naturist for 4 1/2. I believe I was both until society did its job of "civilizing" me and "putting me in my place" which took till I was 3 or 4 yrs. old! So I have returned to my natural state, but with many scars from the many assaults on my psyche and self-esteem.

Since naturism is one more avenue of expression of feminism, I will probably be a naturist for the rest of my life. However, my experience has been that most naturists have not had their consciousness raised regarding sexism. I cannot stand prejudice and therefore, I am forced to be very selective about with whom I spend my time. I just cannot socialize with sexists (or bigots). Most of the people who want to socialize with me have had their consciousness raised, have broadened their thinking, and have discarded limiting stereotypes. I have met some terrific people in the naturist movement and I believe they have opened their minds more toward removing the sexist stereotypes. As soon as I raise their consciousness, they readily agree and henceforth, their comments and language reflect that new, broad, consciousness. But I get so tired of challenging sexist stereotypes, and generally just refuse to concern myself with bigots. I am writing this to explain my experience with sexism in the naturist movement. The bottom line is, I'd rather always be surrounded by feminists. However, since I could not care less about clothes and would rather live my life nude, I will remain a naturist and I believe it's important for me to support this movement.

Now, what I'm writing about are the letters attacking Michelle Handler's opposition to some of the photos in CwS. My gut reaction to the CwS (7.1) centerfold was mild shock. I was taken aback, but it was summer and I was too busy enjoying the sun and having fun to write to you. I am angry and saddened by yours and others' patronizing and vicious responses dismissing the outrage of feminists in the naturist movement. Over the years I have seen many, many pictures in CwS which are offensive to me as a feminist. Fine, it's your own publication and you'll do what you want. But I can no longer believe that you're a feminist. It's been my experience that a feminist listens to women, believes that each persons' Experience is Valid, and works to make life better for all women; a feminist does not tell a person "your experience and your feelings are not valid or important." A truly caring person listens and tries to learn how to be more human. My gut reaction was just that: a genuine gut reaction. What more can I say? You arrogantly think you know what it's like to be a woman!! I used to admire you for your egalitarian writings. I see

now from the angry, patronizing, vicious letters written by male naturists that it appears that men still delight in exercising power over women. How discouraging!! I see it day in and day out, everywhere. We women must constantly fight for change and respect. We've made great strides, but the battle continues. It's a wonder feminists associate with most men at all in any way! Believe me, Lee, you obviously don't know what it's like to be a woman. Just try to remember that!!

## LEE BAXANDALL

*TO LINDA COZZEE*

*March 8, 1988*

I admired your letter to Ms years ago, and I admire your first two paragraphs written to me on Feb. 22, received only today.

You apply 'feminist' values as the only relevant test of a person's writings or actions.

Because Michelle Handler says that her vicious and outrageous attack on me -- quite apart from any photos in CwS -- had 'feminist' underpinnings, you accept every word of her attack as valid.

Well, there are other criteria than believing every false claim to 'feminist' wisdom made by every human being having labia instead of a penis.

There are such criteria as Truthfulness... Consideration...Prior discussion...Avoidance of terrorist tactics...and working through established Channels and Procedures that do not know or depend on sex roles.

I won't go further than to point out here that your singular attachment of value and truth and righteousness to any female over any male, and to any 'feminist' claim to the exclusion of other ethical considerations, is totally unacceptable here.

For the rest, I will apologize to no one for my ethical commitment to equality and fairness - sexual, racial, preferential, what have you -- and as a feminist. I'm sorry, but I cannot "be" a woman to qualify for your respect -- that final test eludes me.

The future will not be made by fanatic sectarians, and that is what you seem. Prove me wrong.

> **"Michelle is steaming mad because CwS, in its "centerspread", portrayed women in a manner similar to Playboy .**
>
> **Lee, she's right. I polled various members of the North Carolina Naturists as to their opinion on this specific issue. Their feelings were the same."**

Carl Flick

## CARL FLICK

*TO LEE BAXANDALL AND JOHN KYFF*

## (OPEN LETTER)

*October 8, 1987*

I have been reading all of the controversy over Michelle Handler's letter of protest to you, Lee, concerning the "centerspread" in the recent edition of CwS. After much thought I decided it was

time to add my voice. As you know Lee, I have been involved for many years in the naturist movement...from the very beginnings of the Naturist Society, to my founding of the North Carolina Naturists in 1981 and my periodic contributions to CwS. And Lee, you are more than an acquaintance...we've found friendship between us during my visits to your home on Cape Cod, the East Coast Naturist Gatherings, and even your visit to my home in Charlotte. So I write this letter with the spirit of our friendship in mind and its continuation in the future.

Although Michelle may have used harsh means to put her point across, her issue remains. Let us look at it closely. Michelle is steaming mad because CwS, in its "centerspread", portrayed women in a manner similar to Playboy . Similar in that the photographs were sexually stimulating and were erotic in nature.

Lee, she's right. I polled various members of the North Carolina Naturists as to their opinion on this specific issue. Their feelings were the same. CwS appeared to be mimicking Playboy . When I purchase Sierra Magazine, I certainly don't expect it to cover sports. It has its specific niche as well as market audience. The same goes for CwS. But with your publication, there's an added danger: most uninitiated people still have trouble distinguishing between naturism and sex, and you know that.

As you also know Lee, Michelle and I are no longer romantic partners. (It's been two years.) But with our past sharing of lives together, I have come to know her like few people ever will. Michelle has a healthy attitude about sex, being a woman, and a strong sense of principle. She is one of the best things that has ever happened to the naturist movement...and I have heard you repeat this time and again throughout the years. It is incumbent upon you to not only address "her" concerns about your magazine, but also my similar concerns, and the many persons (female and male) within the North Carolina Naturists who have also voiced objections.

I have been weighing two other issues very carefully. Is it possible that your negative response to Michelle is a form of censorship afloat in the naturist world? And...quite possibly...could John Kyff's protestations be coming from an emasculated male who doesn't like the forceful opinions of a woman? Think about it. Would John Kyff pound away at his word processor with such zeal if the criticisms were leveled from a man? I wonder.

Lee, I can see why you may be angry with Michelle because she took the issue beyond you, to the various naturist/nudist organizations nationwide. But I was present during your many discussions with Michelle when you voiced commitment to depicting nude men and women in more "everyday activity" photographs. You also discussed the importance of achieving a "balance" with the number of pictures depicting men and women. Remember, male genitalia still has a long way to go before being accepted by the general American populace. It made sense tm push that frontier too.

Finally, somebody put a lid on John Kyff. I think this guy is damaging to the movement. Aside from his "gotta lasso me a woman" attitude, he possesses too much anger to be effective. I think he will do more to scare away new potential converts than any inappropriate oversexualized "centerspreads."

Let's listen to what our male and female constituency has to say and then reach a consensus, and move on, incorporating those suggested changes. Register the North Carolina Naturists firmly behind keeping Michelle in her present capacity, and restore her as a respected female co-fighter

for naturist rights. No one person has all the answers. And there is room in this movement for all of us...provided we can keep the personal insults and deep rooted hang-ups from dividing our ranks. (I'm referring to John Kyff's behavior).

Lee, I remain your committed friend within the naturist movement.

## LEE BAXANDALL

*TO CARL FLICK*

Michelle has cursed what she calls darkness. She does not light candles. Her negativism, harshness, and lack of reality have deeply alienated nearly everyone who has seen her scandalous packet. She has dug herself into a hole and imagines she stands alone and strong on a windwhipped mountain top. Wrong. She's probably undermined her credibility forever in this movement, in the name of a "feminism" which she is too new at to understand properly.

I have heard from many people about this. Who has written to support her view of the world? Her mother (who doesn't always, but here does). Her ex-lover, you. The man to whom she turned over NENA, Tom Calabro. Mary Lou Schloss, her chosen NLC advisor. An effeminist correspondent of hers in Boston.

> *[Baxandall is speaking of Fred Small, a "feminist" activist and songwriter who at no time has defined himself as an "effeminist." "Effeminist", when used in this manner, is anti-gay and anti-women. It is a label frequently used by reactionaries to silence feminist men by striking out at their "manhood" and "sexuality."] Eric Bost -- a nut from Davis, Ca., who has paid Michelle $l,000 to pursue her denunciatory version of feminist naturism. Vadas -- enough said. Who else? No one I know of. Nikki Craft and Nina Silver give her support but only to a point; they approve her good intentions in general but that's about it. [M. Anderson and many others supported Craft and Handler. Craft had told Baxandall many times that she agreed with Handler's criticisms of CwS, though differed slightly in analysis and strategy for presenting the critique. Finally, in August of 1988, Craft was fired for "colluding with Michelle Handler" against TNS and Lee Baxandall.]*

If God is in the details, Carl, Michelle's details here have been awful. Her judgment has been extremely poor and I doubt she can gain the support of naturists again. People seldom get a second chance when they "blow it" this big and this badly.

I wish Michelle luck. I cannot relate to someone who has been this duplicitous in personal relationship (for she had every opportunity to raise issues on a basis of mutual respect, and has instead fired these scandalous lies at me demanding that the world agree or else).

It's pathetic but it's too terrible behavior for me or anyone to assume it's easily put aside.

I reiterate: She is simply unable to get most people, other than those with a close personal relationship, to agree with her description of reality...

## NICK NOVIC

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*April l7, 1988*

. . . Anyway, many things to say on a variety of subjects: I know that this is water under the bridge at this point, but I have to say a few words about the much contended 7.1 issue. I, too, had some problems with some of the "centerfold" photos. While I can't agree entirely with the

objections Michelle made (and especially with the way they were made), she did raise a number of important points which needed to be addressed. Certainly, Edi Broom is, in some of the photos, presented in poses (and they are posed photos, rather than photos which catch a "natural" action) which at least mimic a cheesecake style. If they are attempting to be "playfully erotic" there isn't much artistic merit in the images, which would seem to be one of the things necessary to separate them from a documentary or photojournalistic function. The prone positions she is in and the sort of awareness and playing to the camera (especially the photo where she's in the boat) look a whole lot like the sorts of shots CwS has used as examples in the past of what's not an acceptable style of naturist photography...

Of all the opinions so far expressed in the wake of this, I agree most closely with Nina Silver's well considered letter. All her comments were well taken, including those which addressed the ways in which criticisms were given and taken by both sides. Name calling, questioning motives and personal attacks are unproductive and immature and serve only to cloud the issues at hand and to diminish the credibility of those behaving this way. Unfortunately, through all of this, valid issues have been raised which have been skimmed over or not thoroughly addressed.

**BRAD SCHEWE**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

I just spoke with Lee Ann and I must let you know how concerned I am with regards to a couple of things that are happening within the naturist movement.

Lee Ann has received letters from Nikki and Michelle; the contents of both letters should be well-known to you. Although I don't fully support Michelle's concern against pornography, the issues raised have been working on me for some time also.

For years I've been repulsed and incensed by quite a number of Leif Hielberg's exploitative photos. It takes no special insight to see through this dirty old man. In the name of naturism he sure knows how to get his -- and I'd bet quite a number of other dirty old men's --- rocks off. I'd like to see his kind of T and A banished forever from true naturist publication, beginning with CwS and the World Guide. You have full responsibility over what is or isn't published in these two publications...

> **"First, we find that we are in agreement with Michelle Handler with respect to her concerns on the content of photography in the CwS. Further, we find that she was within her rights to voice her opinion as an individual to bring this subject into the forefront for discussion."**

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, NEW ENGLAND NATURIST ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**(N.E.N.A)**

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*OF N.E.N.A., INC.*

*TO N.L.C. Chairman John E. Sprague*

In the last few weeks all N.L.C. member groups have received copies of letters from Michelle Handler, John Kyff, Nikki Craft, and Lee Baxandall and many others with respect to Michelle's initial letter on the subject of the content of Naturist Photography in the CwS, most notable the last issue published.

In October, at a regular meeting of our Board of Directors, we reviewed Michelle's letters, the rebuttal by John Kyff, and associated commentaries by Lee Baxandall and Nikki Craft, and by a vote of our Board of Directors we have agreed on the following position on the subject at hand.

First, we find that we are in agreement with Michelle Handler with respect to her concerns on the content of photography in the CwS. Further, we find that she was within her rights to voice her opinion as an individual to bring this subject into the forefront for discussion. In this light, we find we agree with the suggestion by N.L.C. President, John Sprague and others, that a meeting of N.L.C. is in order prior to the next Eastern Regional Gathering, and we will endeavor to send a representative to such a meeting...

In so far as NENA was instrumental in creating FREE BEACHES ETIQUETTE [in conjunction with then-coordinator, Michelle Handler], which has since been adopted by all Naturist/Free Beaches groups across the U.S.A. and Canada, we again hope to make positive additions to the movement with our recommendations for "NATURIST PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES", listed below for your consideration.

* Naturist photography for commerial publications should protray and promote the Naturist clothing- optional lifestyle in its true sense.

* Naturist photography which accentuates the genitals or gender attributes of either sex is sexist, degrading and unacceptable.

* No overt or explicit sexual photography is allowed or condoned.

* Ask for permission of those you intend to photograph.

* Nudity for art's sake is not naturism and should not be published in Naturist Publications.

It is our opinion that the Naturist Lifestyle should be portrayed in such a way that we all will feel confident and comfortable to show "Naturist" publications to any non-naturist friends or other parties.

It is our sincere hope that this entire matter can be resolved to a positive end, rather than be divisive. A divided naturist movement would play into the hands of our adversaries; something none of us can afford. The in-fighting must stop.

We welcome your replies and inputs.

> **"...the photographs on pages 41, 97, some in the centerspread and on the bottom of the back cover... portray women in artificial, posed positions not found on clothing optional beaches or in nudist parks. These are just the type of photos that make women reluctant to participate in naturist activities.**
>
> **...A number of our friends who have seen the photographs share our view that the photos offer a poor image of our lifestyle."**

> **"CwS also fails to present the true visual balance of a movement in which its majority members are men. Given an organization of any other kind, no doubt the men would be in the forefront proudly credited with visual and written accolades...**
>
> **The conclusion one must arrive at is clear: women represent the "storefront," the "window-dressing," and the "enticement," to naturism -- that's objectification, any way you slice it."**

**MARY LOU SCHLOSS AND**

**MORLEY SCHLOSS**

**EXCERPTED FROM**

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MOVEMENT**

*[Critical of Handler's process and very supportive of CwS's contributions, past and present, they too expressed concern about the images Handler had criticized.]*

> **"...While not pornographic in the usual sense, the photographs on pages 41, 97, some in the centerspread and on the bottom of the back cover are cheesecake in nature. They portray women in artificial, posed positions not found on clothing optional beaches or in nudist parks. These are just the type of photos that make women reluctant to participate in naturist activities. The women in these photos conform to the media's artificial beauty image (thin, no apparent scars or stretch marks, etc.). A number of our friends who have seen the photographs share our view that the photos offer a poor image of our lifestyle.**

**BERN LOIBL**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

At the moment, CwS 7.1 center-spread "art" points to a future of free-spirited women who feel relaxed nude and comfortable with their sexuality -- women who, like innocent children, accept themselves without concern over the tarnished lustful thoughts of the male onlooker. Actually, that's almost an admiral goal. It's also the perfect male fantasy. The missing elements are the women's intellectual and creative qualities -- "whole person."

CwS also fails to present the true visual balance of a movement in which its majority members are men. Given an organization of any other kind, no doubt the men would be in the forefront proudly credited with visual and written accolades, and the women (typically) offered the usual supporting back seat -- "the little woman behind her man." The conclusion one must arrive at is clear: women represent the "storefront," the "window-dressing," and the "enticement," to naturism -- that's objectification, any way you slice it. This imagery is also a lure (through unintentional, I'm sure) for men, and a deterrent for thinking women who do not appreciate being displayed, or see other women displayed, for this purpose.

**LEE BAXANDALL**

*TO BERN LOIBL*

*September 22, 1987*

I think that Edi Broom is no ninny as these complainers assume. Her reflectiveness shows -- for those not impressed by vitality -- in the photo printed lower left of page one of the center portfolio, where a strong intelligence is apparent to anyone not simply looking for thin white women to denigrate. As for her creative qualities, these are in her presentations to the camera -- again, if the viewer can appreciate expressivity and not simply knock it because the subject is nude.

I do not apologize for the proportions of men in CwS. Just a few years ago I was getting angry letters from men dropping subs because of a single male on the cover -- the snowshoer. On the other hand, I have not received a letter of appreciation by a woman for the many males that do appear. Never. It is all discouragement of males, and no encouragement not even from the callow feminists. It is I who have taken that risk because it was right. CwS has pioneered with the male nude and I will not take any latecomer's ignorant shit about the history and status of this happening.

> *[Nikki Craft commended Baxandall many times during university and community presentations, as well as crediting him in an article published in CwS 6.2.]*

Bern, I am thoroughly angered by the presumptuous ignorance of Michelle's little vendetta. If she weren't an overnight wonder of feminism there might be more understanding not to mention more procedural good sense. But she's never been noted for great judgment and this is the bottom of her style.

Michelle's salvo and my response will appear in the next CwS. I see no basis of working further with her. She can do what she likes, and we shall see how constructive she can be insulated from the horrors of CwS.

> **"One more final observation: Have you ever noticed the majority of Naturist advertisements have at least one female (usually alone) in them. You won't find a naturist resort ad with a single man will you? We naturists have got to tell our leaders to stop presenting images that may lead "outsiders" to think we are a bunch of homophobes."**

## ERIC BOST

## ERIC BOST

*TO THE EDITOR, CLOTHED WITH THE SUN*

## RE: EXPLOITATIVE ADVERTISING IN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN?

[In December, 1986 Eric Bost wrote a "Letter to the Editor" that Baxandall refused to print. This letter lodged protests about the Club Sea ad in CwS 6.2 and commented on the use of "select, young naked women" put up for inspection by male readers of CwS. Regarding Desmond Morris's "Body Watching" article Bost asked, "How could you print the body of a woman with her head cut off? Didn't you read my letter about the decapitated manikin?" (a previous letter by Bost criticizing the content of CwS).

The following is a compilation of several letters written by Bost but never submitted to Baxandall. In January, 1987, Bost returned his membership card to TNS, cut up in four pieces, as a result of frustration felt because of a defensive posturing taken by Baxandall when criticized.

Bost, whom Baxandall has characterized as a "nut" (letter to Carl Flick), is a civil engineer, a published journalist on mental health issues, and an activist for animal rights and "Green" politics. A court case initiated by Bost reaffirmed, on a state-wide basis, a policy asserting that naturist activity practiced without complaints by the public is legal.]

April ll, 1988

I don't like writing critiques like this one because it is depressing. I would much rather be skinny snorkeling in Lake Tahoe, or backpacking in the Sierras, or marching in a peace rally, or even circulating petitions to raise taxes on cigarettes. God, how I love raising taxes on cigarettes!

The reason I am writing this is to get people interested in making this movement something more than just about taking one's clothes off. Naturism forces us to learn about our sexuality, our vulnerabilities and imperfections (physical and spiritual), and our biases in gender politics.

And the only way to learn, sometimes, is the hard way. I think we all know that.

Following are some selected advertisements that have appeared in CwS which I think clearly illustrate a fundamental lack of understanding of naturism by Lee Baxandall, owner of The Naturist Society and publisher of CwS.

From CwS 6.2, we read, "Educating Julie...Starring Gail Ward, as shy naive Julie Potter who is given a project to research during the summer vacation...'Nudity in the 80's...Share with her the humour, the embarrassment, the conflicts with family and friends, and the first time she has to strip off."

Within the advertisement we see a nude "shy, naive" Julie looking barely l6 years old. And for $59.95 plus $4. shipping we can watch "shy, naive" Julie, "...the first time she has to strip off."

This movie advertisement reads like a teen lust flick! She was "given" (forced to accept) this research project and then she "has to strip off." Is this really what we want to see in our naturist publication? I thought wearing clothing was an option in this movement. No one should have to take their clothes off if they don't feel like it.

What does the public think of us when they read advertisements like this? What kind of people would be attracted to this movie and what gender do you think they are?

It could very well be that the movie does indeed promote naturism in a healthy and wholesome way. But, from reading the ad one might think otherwise.

It is time to stop and ask these questions because naturism is losing its credibility.

The concept of advertising is, by itself, a good one because it informs the public regarding services or products that can enhance the quality of life. Advertising is also a means in which publications can remain economically afloat. So please, don't get the idea that I'm against all advertising.

What I object to is when the profit motivation is so intense that it tries to convince people that they need something when they really don't or when negative role models or objectification of people (or any animal for that matter) is used to sell some product or service. The latter is what is plaguing CwS, the publication of The Naturist Society.

Now let us go back to CwS 6.2. On page 2 we find the nationally infamous Club Sea advertisement in which a young woman wearing a one piece bathing suit is standing in water with her legs spread. The woman's expression looks post orgasmic.

Can you imagine a post-orgasmic Mr. Baxandall posed like that instead of the woman?

This same advertisement appeared in the December 1986 MS. Magazine under the "No Comments" section. "No Comments" meaning that it is so degrading to women that it is not worth commenting about. I sent Mr. Baxandall that issue of MS. for his review over a year ago.

Did Mr. Baxandall ever apologize to his readers for making the mistake of publishing the Club Sea advertisement? No. Mr. Baxandall is the owner of CwS and that makes him accountable. And, if you are a member of the Mr. Baxandall's Naturist Society you are accountable too because you financially support him with your membership fee. Isn't it too bad you can't even vote on policies that affect what you want to see in CwS.

Isn't it rather silly to be a member of an organization and not have any electoral control over it? But I digress.

From CwS 7.3 we see a photograph of a nude little boy, about six years old holding a telephone. To the side of the boy we read: 'Hi, Buddy? --Josh. Gotta see this mag I found --"clothing-optional LIFE". No, it ain't boring. Half is big pics of guys like us who like to go bare naked. l5 bucks for 4 issues. Got a pencil? [Address for Ordering.] Yeah, you keep it bare too, Bud."

What kind of person would subscribe to a magazine because of "big pics" of nude little boys? "Big Pics"? Maybe COL isn't child porn, but how do you think the public would interpret this advertisement? What kind of image of naturism do we want to present to the general public. If I didn't think it was such a serious matter I might even laugh at this ad.

Why can't we leave kids alone and let them play? I think it is unethical for a publisher to drag small children into photopolitics. What do you think? Taking pictures of nude children for the family album is fine, but publishing the photos in a media that is out of the parent's and child's control is entirely different.

Another advertisement that merits criticism is for the Firefly Resort in Jamaica. We see a young nude woman in an awkward reclining pose holding a beverage. Is this how we want the public to perceive the naturist lifestyle? She looks so uncomfortable in that pose.

Again, can you imagine Mr. Baxandall posed like that instead of the woman? This is what I mean when I write about "biases in gender politics."

One more final observation: Have you ever noticed the majority of Naturist advertisements have at least one female (usually alone) in them. You won't find a naturist resort ad with a single man will you? We naturists have got to tell our leaders to stop presenting images that may lead "outsiders" to think we are a bunch of homophobes.

I admit, I was once a homophobe. I didn't change until I saw how I was hurting some of my friends. Like I said, learning is not always easy.

I do want to make it clear that many advertisements appearing within the pages of CwS are not exploitative. But all it takes is a couple of negative images to ruin the credibility of the entire movement.

I want naturism to thrive, and I want the general public to take us seriously. I also don't want politicians and other progressive organizations to ignore us because our journals exploit the nudity and conventional role models of women.

I would encourage you to start asking questions on why naturism has not caught on the way it should. We can only change our society if we first change ourselves. But, before we can change we have got to understand our mistakes, and not be afraid of that vulnerability.

> **"The question is, then, do you as owner, publisher, and editor at CwS support this stereotype of women ("girls") as deferential, fantasy beings, or do you choose an editorial policy which celebrates all women and shows real naturism? Your attack on Michelle Handler makes your answer obvious."**

**M. ANDERSON**

**M. ANDERSON**

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*September 28, l988*

I believe I am by nature and consciousness a potential member of the naturist movement.

After encountering six issues of CwS, however, I am surprised by what passes as "naturist" photography. For example, I am deeply dismayed by the centerspread in issue 7.1 and its accompanying copy. I feel certain that you would not print eleven consecutive photos of one 18-year-old male, especially in similar poses. This layout is about Edi Broom's form. Though two of the twelve images include Brian, we are told that the spread is about "A One and Only Body." We know to whom you refer.

I ask your readers to reread the copy with these pictures as if they were viewing a Penthouse. Does it make sense? I read the copy, and I sensed why you felt Edi's young age was relevant. You continue the description of Edi: "innocent" (the virgin), "knowing" (the whore), and "very exuberant with natural behavior." I looked up the word "exuberant" and the definition includes both "joyously enthusiastic" and "flamboyantly overdone, and extreme or excessive degree." It seems to me that one cannot be both "flamboyantly overdone" and "natural."

Edi--natural? With her affectation, and pubic mohawk, I doubt it. I support Edi's right to play to the camera, which Brian claims "she loves," but let's call her histrionics artificial, not spontaneous. She has the beauty queen stance down: shoulders back, breasts up, stomach sucked in, and the oh-so-shapely curve of one bent knee, lifting a turned ankle. In heels and a swimsuit, she'd be mean competition.

I should know. I infiltrated the Miss America Program, and won the title of Miss Santa Cruz. Before live TV cameras in the final moments of the Miss California Pageant, I pulled a protest

banner from my dress which read "Pageants Hurt All Women." After spending 18 months within the system, I understand how pageants teach that the exuberant and idiotic poses and smiles women assume for the camera are "natural." Pictures like these of Edi Broom only reinforce the same, harmful message. I came away from my experience as a young activist/feminist with a knowledge that Edi is not to blame. She, like all of us, has learned that pliant and demure poses are more attractive to men.

The question is, then, do you as owner, publisher, and editor at CwS support this stereotype of women ("girls") as deferential, fantasy beings, or do you choose an editorial policy which celebrates all women and shows real naturism? Your attack on Michelle Handler makes your answer obvious.

If you think Michelle Handler is alone in her objections to this centerfold, you are mistaken. You can count many young women with a keen eye for social change out of the future of naturism. I am one.

## LEE BAXANDALL

### *TO M. ANDERSON*

*October 4, l988*

Please forward a copy of this reply to Nikki Craft, whose computer, misappropriated from the Naturist Society, and whose style, are very evident in the letter you signed so kindly for her.

Now to the points you undersigned: You are described as a "potential member of the naturist movement." Hmmm.

I do see you as a stalking-horse for Nikki Craft, who has enlisted you to sign a letter which, when not published, will become a 'cause celebre' because the famous M. Anderson has not been printed.

I think you need to know, Michelle, that Nikki Craft has just destroyed a major legal suit for the rights of women to enjoy naturism and equal protection in naturism.

For vindictive reasons only, Craft has adopted the arguments of the rightwing Citizens for Decency.

I know Craft supported you well in your subversion of the Miss California 1988 event. Craft moreover imagines that "she is you," having schemed and lied during her last 18 or so months of living with me. She believes that you were equally moles within a reactionary social institution.

There are two flaws in that argument. The Naturist Society is not a reactionary social institution. And Craft's behavior has been ethically despicable, ranging from extensive common theft, to deceit without a redemptive social purpose, to interference with a progressive class action case solely because she is dissatisfied with my asking her to leave here.

Please, Ms Anderson, do not put your ethical stature behind the immoral doings of a once-admired activist. Craft is a bitter and vindictive and cynical person at this time; I hope she gets over it. You do not need to dirty your name with her private agenda for getting even.[Nikki writes July 26, 2026, 40 years later reading this letter that Lee’s reply is hilarious and so revealing of him, not of me.]

## M. ANDERSON

*TO LEE BAXANDALL*

*Santa Cruz, California*

Oct. 2l, l988

Yes, Lee, there is more than one Macintosh out there. And yes, Lee, there is more than one articulate feminist dissatisfied with your pictorial decisions out there. Your presumption that I would sign something I had not written is an insult.

I do not intend to defend or discuss Nikki Craft and your personality conflict with her. I do not intend to "dirty my name;" only to add it to the many who perceive that CwS has seriously gone awry in its visual portrayal of women.

True, I am a "potential member of the naturist movement." My point is that you will not only lose current members, but also prospective ones by your callous attitude toward this issue. Perhaps you do not care about the future of naturism.

I would like to see the letter I composed and signed printed in CwS. I am hardly "the famous Anderson," but if my name bothers you, I challenge you to print other letters representing similar analyses of the issues.

> *[Anderson sealed this letter with one of the Apple Computer stickers given out to owners of new computers.]*

## PRESTON SPAULDING

*TO: LEE BAXANDALL*

*Knoxville, Tennessee*

...Second, Erik Holm's warning to avoid looking pornographic (pg. l4) echoes my thoughts precisely. I am steadfastly opposed to Mr. Dumelle's suggestion to incorporate "positive" sexuality into CwS. I appreciate what he is saying, but since we are already misperceived as sex-crazed we must overcompensate and avoid any material that makes our publications even superficially comparable to pornography. We must, as Holm suggests, use excruciating self-control as a matter of short-term credibility whether we want to or not.

The Brian and Edi Broom "centerfold" is, sadly, a bad example. I don't question that the intent was noble, but let's face it -- this centerfold looks like a centerfold. It is a beautiful liability, primarily because it is in color, all photos with no text, and so prominently, intensely presented. Issue 7.1 is the closest I've seen to an ideal introduction to naturism as a serious and relevant topic, but the centerfold would have to be razored out. I can't bring myself to deface it that way.